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No.
33.—Sunday Evening with the Secularists.
34.—A Morning with the Unitarians.
37.—The Rev. W. A. O'Connor.
38.—Taking Holy Orders under Bishop Lee.
38.—A Children's Chapel (Rusholme Road Independent).
39.—The Swedenborgians (Rev. John Hyde).
41.—St. Mary's, Hulme (Rev. F. C. Woodhouse.)
41.—The Stowell Memorial Church.
42.—Birch Church (Rev. Canon Anson).
43.—An Evening with the Christian Brethren.
45.—Manchester Cathedral.
45.—Sale Independent Chapel (Rev. Edward Morris).
46.—The German Church, Greenheys.
47.—Ritualism in Manchester (St. John Baptist's).
48.—St. Saviour's Church Rev W. F. Birch).
50.—The Rev. J. A. Gardiner (Presbyterian).
51.—Church Music in Manchester (Holy Trinity, Hulme, and the Jesuit Church).
52.—A Morning with the Baptists (Rev. H. J. Betts).
53.—The Church of the Ascension (Rev. C. T. Watson).
53.—Northen Churchyard.
54.—The Wesleyan College, Didsbury.
55.—St. Michael's and its Rector (Rev. G. S. Allen).
58.—Great Fast of the Jews.
59.—Deserted Churches: 1. St. Clement's.
60.—The Rev. J. A. Macfadyen.
61.—Deserted Churches: 2. St. Mary's.
62.—The Rev. G. W. Conder.
65.—Deserted Churches: 3. Sacred Trinity, Salford.
67.—Cheeryble Brothers' Church.
68.—A Visit to the Parish Church, Ashton-under-Lyne.

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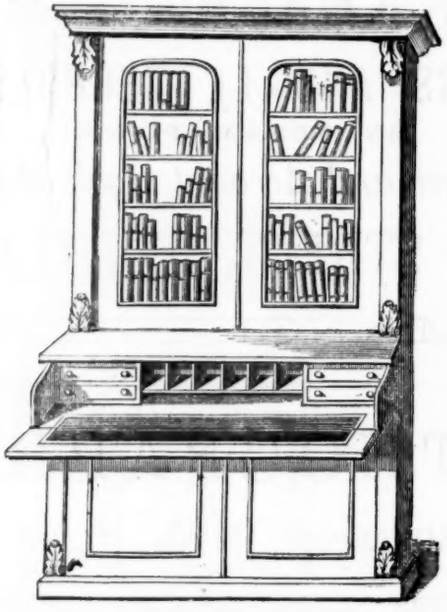

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AN EVENING WITH THE SCIENTIFIC STUDENTS.

IN Victoria Street stands an edifice which has already been described in our columns as (architecturally) one of the ugliest, as well as one of the most expensive, of our municipal buildings. Below, *i.e.*, on the ground floor, it consists of shops, principally devoted to the sale of fish, and, for a long time, we believed that the many-windowed first-floor overhead was a sort of covered-in fish market, though we never could discover how the fish or their proprietors found access to it, unless through some one, or more, of the shops below, neither were there any outward and visible signs of fish buying and selling to be seen about it. Still we knew, in a vague sort of way, that this was the Fishmarket Hall, and it struck us that possibly the fishmongers might have a sort of club or exchange upstairs; that perhaps they might have formed themselves into a guild or brotherhood, and celebrated here, from time to time, certain rites and ceremonies, or held occasional banquets, after the fashion of their brethren in London.

A week or two ago our surmises were set at rest. We paid a visit to this mysterious building, and inspected all its ins and outs, as guests of the Manchester Scientific Students' Association. Of this association we had previously known a little, as it were from a distance, through certain members, who were verily scientific students in their own homes, and had kindly admitted us to various scientific gatherings of a private nature, whereat learned things were learnedly discussed, marvellously minute objects with marvellously long names were inspected through microscopes, and an amount of knowledge shown which made us feel, to a painful degree, how ignorant and unscientific we were. Every now and again, these friends were busy collecting materials for lectures, or papers, which they had to deliver or read before their brethren, at the meetings of the association. It appeared to us that the society was a mutual improvement one, and that to be a member at all implied diligent study and a faculty for cracking hard nuts of knowledge. All this, as we said, was a distant acquaintance. Now, however, we came to close quarters with the association. Let us add that it was not for want of many and pressing invitations that we had been so long on distant terms. The Scientific Students are as hospitable as they are learned. Perhaps the learned part of the business may, to some extent, hinder ignoramuses like ourselves from making proper use of the hospitality.

Down the Market Place, past the curious old house which, with its overhanging stories, stands yet a relic of Manchester gone by, and so to a doorway on the left. Through this doorway a staircase, and at the top of the staircase several gentlemen, who receive our ticket, and point us towards a little room to the left, where we deposit our outer garments amidst a perfect Black Sea of coats and hats, flooding walls, chairs, and floor. Then, displayed in all the glories of dress coat and white tie, we are admitted through another door into a large room, where a grey—we should rather say white—haired and similarly bearded gentleman is delivering a lecture before a highly-respectable audience—respectable in numbers as well as appearance—some seated on chairs arranged in rows before the lecturer, and others standing round these chairs in a wide circle, all listening attentively, and with apparently great interest. The lecturer is Professor Williamson, F.R.S., and he is opening the "usual conversazione of the association for this session," by a lecture on "Protoplasm, considered in its relation to Organic Life." We have too much respect for our legs to stand, under any circumstances, when it is possible to sit; so, catching sight of a comfortable-looking divan which occupies one corner of the room, we make our way thither, and, seated in company with several scientific students, wiser in their generation than their fellows, we survey the conversazione and listen to the lecture, at our ease. Although quite removed from the bulk of the audience, and as far from the lecturer as it is possible to get, yet such is the clearness of Professor Williamson's voice, the distinctness of his delivery, and the rapt attention of his hearers, that it requires no effort at all to follow his discourse. We are not complimenting him in the least when we say that he is as good a lecturer as we ever heard—and their name is Legion. Knowing about as much of protoplasms as we did of Chinese metaphysics or Egyptian hieroglyphics, we were interested in spite of ourselves, forced to listen, kept in a state of attention for an hour and a half, and actually, at the close of the lecture, had some dim notion of what protoplasms are, and of the way in which they are related to, or rather constitute, the life of animals and plants. We feel almost afraid, while writing down these last few words, of falling into some blunder, and shall certainly not jeopardize our newly acquired knowledge by any further account of the lecture itself. Suffice it for the reader to know that, according to Professor Williamson, we are all "converted masses of protoplasm"—a phrase which struck us somewhat oddly, as we happened at the moment to hold in our hands a notice of the Missionary Exhibition, one of a bundle which lay on a table close by—and our thoughts wandered off, at once, to our brother converted and yet unconverted, black and red and brown masses of protoplasm beyond the seas, who may, some day perhaps—at least we hope so—have a Professor Williamson of their own, as well as a missionary. The professor could be jocular, too, in the midst of all his learning, as, for instance, when pausing for a moment to refresh himself with a glass of water, he took occasion to relate an apropos anecdote of a scientific friend who, finding that an infusion of brandy caused all the animalculæ in water to turn up their tails and expire, made a resolution never to drink water again "*without first killing the animalculæ*." The professor laid a comic stress on these last words, which seemed greatly to amuse the attentive students.

While the lecture is going on, and when the professor gets a little beyond our depth, as he does occasionally, and, we humbly confess, unavoidably, we manage to take a quiet survey of the room and audience. The former is remarkable for windows. In fact, the end where we are sitting is all windows together. This end is, moreover, sliced off in most peculiar fashion, so that the corner behind us is acute angled. The prevailing tint of the walls is brown, and there are busts of eminent politicians—Cobden, Bright, and Co.—here and there between the windows. There are tables round the walls, covered with all sorts of scientific curiosities, instruments, mechanical inventions, photograms, botanical specimens, minerals, micoscropical slides, and things whereof we know neither the name nor use. On the walls, especially behind the lecturer, are numerous highly-coloured diagrams. Protoplasms, espe-especially, are represented in all varieties of size and shape. As to the audience, the gentlemen outnumber the ladies in the proportion of about two to one, but still the fair sex is fairly represented—fairly, in every sense. There are not only grave elderly ladies, brimful of science to their very spectacles, but fair young maidens in bewitching chignons and opera cloaks, whose presence is quite sufficient to distract the attention of any number of scientific students from any lecture, however interesting. These ladies, young and old, listen with such devout attention, and applaud with such fervour at the close, that, upon our word and honour, we believe they understand the whole subject from beginning to end.

It is, apparently, more than Mr. Plant, the curator at Peel Park, does. He is called upon to move a vote of thanks to the professor, which he proceeds to do by declaring his ignorance of what, after all, protoplasm really is. He calls upon the professor for a few final words of explanation; a clerical student seconds the vote, in few words, and then the professor thanks the audience, and enlightens Mr. Plant so far as he is able. After this, everybody gets up, and walks about. A crowd surrounds the professor, another crowd inspects the knitting machine, a third the photograms, a fourth the geological specimens, a fifth rushes upstairs, to a small room where some dozen miscroscopes are exhibited; a sixth, the largest of all, promenades and chats up and down the room. We make a slow and observant tour, inspect everything, from the big church-clock to a magnified flea; and then, having safely fished up our outer garments from the Black Sea, which has grown considerably larger since we were in the cloak-room before, we thank our hosts, and depart homewards.

We believe the room, which on this occasion, and about once a week or so during the winter, is devoted to science, to be, at all other times and seasons, the Cotton Waste Dealers' Exchange. The gentlemen who used, on market days, to throng the flags in High Street and the corner of Fountain Street, a nuisance to passers-by and a perpetual burthen and discomfort to the police, have taken refuge here, and much better off, we should think, they find themselves.

OTHELLO.

NOTWITHSTANDING Charles Lamb's dictum that *Othello* is unsuitable for representation, and his opinion of the improbability of Desdemona's falling in love with the Moor on account of his complexion (an unusually cynical remark for the gentle Elia to make), the tragedy continues to be one of the most absorbing and effective on the stage, even when only moderately acted in some of the principal parts. The story is so thrilling in interest, so teeming with human passion, so abounding in pathos, set forth and illustrated with such exquisite poetry, that the attention of the audience is rivetted from beginning to end.

Our criticism last week of Mr. Phelps in the character of Sir Pertinax Macsycophant relieves us of the duty of further analyzing his general style of acting. On Saturday last, in *Othello*, the same keen insight into character, the same accuracy of conception, and facility of execution, the same evidence of close study, accompanied by spontaneous action during the progress of the play, were distinguishable as they were in the former unique and remarkable impersonation. Mr. Phelps' conception of the character of Othello is, for the most part, the traditional one adopted by our greatest actors, marked by certain peculiarities of his own, but unaccompanied by any straining after novel readings. In the first two acts, he represents Othello calm, tranquil, and imbued with a sense of modest self-respect. This is in strict accordance with the text, and is mirrored in the lines :

> My soul hath her content so absolute
> That not another comfort like to this
> Succeeds in unknown fate.

Until nearly the close of the second act, Othello gives no intimation of his fiery nature. The first revelation of his temperament previous to his giving ear to Iago's diabolical insinuations, is his conduct in the scene after the midnight brawl, when he reiterates his demand, "Who began it ?"

> By heaven,
> My blood begins my safer guides to rule :
> And passion, having my best judgment collied,
> Assays to lead the way.

With the exception of this passage, in which Mr. Phelps gave the audience a foretaste of what was coming, he performed the first two acts with a quiet, dignified repose of manner which, although in perfect harmony with the text, showed great conscientiousness and self-control. Nothing could be more picturesque than his entrance in the second scene of the play. About his martial bearing and address, there was a certain barbaric dignity and pomp, appropriate to the character of the Moorish General. His manly affection for, and pride in, Desdemona, were characteristic of the soldier bridegroom, whose "arms since they had seven years' pith, till now some nine moons wasted, had used their dearest action in the tented field." Mr. Phelps has always been remarkable for the possession of much pathetic power, and although his voice is not so flexible as it once was, it is still clear and resonant. For rugged pathos he has always been unrivalled among his peers, and his address to the senate, without the slightest attempt at any ostentatious and elocutionary display, was remarkable for this quality, and made its way at once to the sympathies of his audience. It is not until the third act that we gain an insight into the turbulent fire lying dormant in Othello's breast, which afterwards burst into the raging flame which consumed him.

The tremendous excitement of the third and fourth acts comes like a thunderstorm after the calmness of the first two. The well-graced actor's powers are tried to the uttermost, and wonderfully does Mr. Phelps come through the ordeal. The various passions and emotions—doubt, suspicion, love and tenderness, jealousy, hatred, fury, and self-abasement—which convulse the distraught and "perplex'd" Othello are powerfully depicted, and have an electric effect upon the audience. This was so startling on Saturday night that, after some of the most thrilling passages, even the gods forgot to applaud—about the highest compliment which could be paid to the actor, and worth fifty recalls. Whether in listening to the hints and insinuations of Iago, or in giving way to the wildest bursts of rage, Mr. Phelps' action, attitudes, and gestures are in keeping with both. When Iago first hints a doubt and hesitates dislike at the interview between Cassio and Desdemona, his indifference of manner is well assumed. When the insidious poison begins to work, and his suspicions are aroused, he starts as if stung by a serpent, and Iago's caution to beware of jealousy, produces in him a mingled exhibition of rage and fear of himself which convulses his whole frame. When he tells Iago to set on his wife to watch, the accompanying look of disgust and self-humiliation at his suggestion or the espionage is very finely conceived; and, in perfect keeping, the same feelings are shown subsequently, when he contemptuously throws down the purse at Emilia's feet, exclaiming

> We have done our course. There's money for your pains ;
> I pray you turn the key, and keep our counsel.

In the third and fourth acts the excitement culminates, and the consummation of the tragedy is anticipated. As a calm must follow all storms, so Othello's sobbing breast, his shaking frame and frenzied rage, are succeeded by a calm, and his demeanour in the fifth act, until the moment when he slays Desdemona, is solemn and depressed. Deluding himself with the idea, "It is the cause, my soul, it is the cause!" and that her murder partakes of the nature of a sacrifice, while he shrinks to "shed her blood, or scar that whiter skin of hers than snow," he never departs for an instant from his fell purpose. In this arduous scene Mr. Phelps' acting was subdued and in perfect good taste. His attitude and look when he emerges from the recess, when disturbed by the knocking, were startling and suggestive. Finally, when the truth is elicited, and he realizes the full horror of the situation—of the trick which has been played upon him, and the awful consequences—his burst of rage, despair, and remorse is appalling.

> Whip me, ye devils,
> From the possession of this heavenly sight ;
> Blow me about in winds, roast me in sulphur,
> Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!
> O Desdemona ! Desdemona ! dead——

These words were delivered by Mr. Phelps with an energy of speech and action, and a concentrated intensity, which were absolutely overwhelming.

On Tuesday, Mr. Phelps and Mr. Calvert changed characters. Alternating parts is always a hazardous experiment, and, we believe, much disliked by actors. We don't wonder at it, and on one occasion we recollect seeing Macbeth and Macduff becoming so confused, that they kept calling each other by the wrong names—"Lay on Macbeth," and so forth. In so far, however, as it gave a Manchester audience the opportunity of witnessing Mr. Phelps as Iago, we are grateful for the arrangement. If anything were wanting to show Mr. Phelps' versatility this impersonation would prove it. He completely shed the husk of Othello, and was the cunning, quick-witted Italian, with an outward show of honesty, to the life. Ever watching, ever scheming, whether he was wheedling, cozening, and befooling Roderigo, "ensnaring" Cassio, tempting Othello, or making "the net that should enmesh them all," this sharp-witted, "super-subtle Venetian" stood before us, the incarnation of malignity. Mr. Phelps' by-play and naturalness in this character are remarkable. Most actors deliver Iago's asides in a loud voice and to the audience. Mr. Phelps repeats them quietly and rapidly to himself. As an instance, "O you are well tuned now, but I'll put down the pegs will make this music—as honest as I am." His mock humility was wonderfully displayed. Sometimes he looked like a transfigured Uriah Heep, sometimes like a gay young gallant, and sometimes like the——. His final exit was equal to any other feature of the performance. Glancing round with one look of ineffable scorn, he reared himself erect and strode out of the room, defiant to the last.

Mr. Calvert's Iago and Othello are impersonations so well known in Manchester that they call for little comment. As Iago, he gave Mr. Phelps efficient support, and he certainly is correct in not assuming a look of villainy when he is in the presence of others. When alone, Mr. Calvert might put on a more Mephistophelian air with effect. Some of Mr. Calvert's readings were new, and their correctness open to question, and he wore such enormously high-heeled shoes or buskins, that they seemed to interfere with his gait, without adding a cubit to his stature.

[LIVING MEN OF LETTERS.]

5.—LORD LYTTON.

"BY birth Bulwer-Lytton was (is) *above the class* from which the ranks of the literary profession are filled; for, though not of a dazzling lineage, he was, on both sides, of *gentle* origin." So far Mr. John Cordy Jeaffreson. It is very easy to copy from the *Peerage*. Is it necessary to tell of a certain Bolver, son of Thunder, a Dane who came over with the Conqueror, and was descended from some Danish Viking? You can read that in Bulwer-Lytton's genealogy in Sir Bernard Burke's *Peerage*. The truth is Bulwer is a gentleman, and he looks it; a man of good blood and sound breed; his hands, feet, hair, and air show it. But Mr. Jeaffreson ought to know that our best writers are almost all of "gentle" origin, *testibus* Milton, Dryden, Addison, Sterne, Waller, Shaftesbury, Shakespere. However, let us get back to Bulwer. It is a long way from Shakespere to Bulwer; let us take the leap!

This "gentle" origin, falling upon the offspring of two families, each of which had money, led to our author's custom of changing names. At one time he was Lytton-Bulwer; at another he was Bulwer-Lytton. His eldest brother, William Bulwer, the only one undistinguished out of three, holds the ancestral house at Heydon Hall, Norfolk, as fine a specimen of the architecture of the time of James I. as one can see, and in the village there is to be found one of the neatest of little inns, with the "Bulwer Arms" as a sign. As Bulwer, too, this great author—for he is great in spite of his shortcomings and his vanity—made himself known; as Bulwer he won his first fame by novels full of a precocious wisdom and a dangerous finesse; as Bulwer he wrote those famous plays, full of wit, point, cleverness, sparkle, and miserable gilded, or rather lacquered, poetry; as Bulwer he gave us boys those admirable sentiments from the mouth of Claude Melnotte, which we took for poetry, and spouted till the tears came from our eyes. Do not we all remember them?

> Nay dearest, nay, if thou would'st have me paint
> The home to which, could love fulfil its prayers,
> This hand should lead thee—listen!
> A palace *lifting* to eternal summer
> Its marble walls from out a gloomy bower
> Of coolest foliage, musical with birds
> *Whose songs should syllable thy name!*

Well, they were pleasant days when we believed in this very clever writer's poetry. He gave it us raw, but it had such a glamour of cleverness over it that we accepted it as something very rare, and did not quite relish the unconscionably loud laughter into which Thackeray threw us when he tore the mask off the *Sea Captain* in *Fraser's Magazine*. Some tender soul, who has a love for poetic pruriency, and thinks that God-given talent should be used for the corruption of God's creatures, has written to us, shocked at our treatment of Swinburne. We will show him,, who has read little and understands less, how Thackeray and Tennyson could handle (critically of course) Bulwer-Lytton, and how Thackeray could carry the attack on the fair possessions of Tennyson. Remember we are only on the side of Truth. We allowed all due appreciation for Mr. Swinburne's poetry. We wish that he, in carrying out his fine cookery of Greek and French dishes, had done that which the English gentleman requested the Irish waiter to do—served them in separate plates, and had allowed us to mix them ourselves. But enough. Strike and spare not is our motto here, when the blow is deserved. Praise and praise generously is but a pendant to it.

To our subject. Walking, let us say, up the hall of the Freemasons at a Literary Fund dinner, there is a gentleman, rather feeble, doddering, a Cousin Feenix, with tumbled hair, a face rouged, flushed, a noble forehead and high aristocratic nose, a gentleman unmistakably, a gentleman with "the true nobleman look" that you do not find one man in a thousand has, and of which Pope spoke. He is not very strong, this gentleman, and has a scared kind of stare—that, indeed, of a student out in the world. In this living face and in photographs from it, there is a suspicion that it is "got up" to what its owner thinks its best; that Pelham would be younger than he is. Vain struggle with Time; what gentle waggoner can put a "skid" on his wheel when he is going down hill, "or with a finger stay Ixion's wheel," as Keats has it. Look at the hair brushed forward and manipulated, the eyebrows, whiskers, and hair somewhat darkened, the moustache and imperial! The whole look of the man has just the clever *artistry*—not insincerity, for Lord Lytton is a true man—which is the little bit of bad taste which has prevented its master from being the very first in his rank. The little reft within the lute, and little rotten speck of garnered fruit—you know the rest. How wonderfully like his books every man is! Noble Charles Kingsley, superfine Lord Lytton; rocky Ben Jonson, with the "mountain belly and the rocky face;" gentle Shakespere; pure and biblical John Milton; and "wicked" Lord Byron, as vain as wicked, and as wicked as vain—how you throw your own shadows and lights upon your pages!

This man, Lord Lytton, who has written a most acute essay on the difference between Genius and Talent, has so high a share of the latter that he touches on the confines of the first. His industry is marvellous—as great as his genius. Let us rapidly see what he has done. He was born in 1805. His father, General Bulwer, died in 1807. In 1810 the little precocious fellow wrote verses in the Percy ballad style. In 1820, at the mature age of fifteen, he sent out *Ismael, an Oriental Tale*, with other poems, one on Waterloo, in which Corporal Shaw, the Life Guardsman, figures as a hero:

> Meantime brave Shaw usurps the martial plain,
> And spreads the field with Gallic heaps of slain.

Ismael is not bad stuff; many a poet of fifty worries his face into wrinkles because the Press will not praise worse stuff. The young poet went to Cambridge after a course of private tutorship, and became a swell at Trinity Hall. In 1825 he won the Chancellor's Prize medal, and, after another volume of verse, gave us, in 1827, his first novel, *Falkland*, the hero of which is, of course, Byronic, wicked, Satanic even. So much harm had the Byron fever done. To laugh sardonically, to hate men much and women more, to scorn the world and yet to hunger for it, was then thought fine and strong. His next work was *Mortimer, or the Adventures of a Gentleman*, which the publishers, with their usual insight, rejected. However, the word Mortimer was altered to *Pelham*, and the effect was magical. The publishers issued it, and the public bought and praised it. It is a wonderfully clever novel for so young a man (published in 1828) of the superfine kid-glove and silver-fork school. Bulwer had used his education as well as his observation, and sarcasm and quotations are pretty well mixed in the result. In 1827 Bulwer graduated B.A. In the same year he married Rosina Wheeler, daughter of a gentleman of Limerick, and the marriage has not been a happy one, *testibus* Lady Lytton's spiteful novel of *Cheveley, or the Man of Honour*, and others; but from this marriage sprang the Hon. Edward Robert Bulwer (born 1832), a poet of no mean order, known as Owen Meredith.

In 1828, after *Pelham*, came the *Disowned*, and then, in quick succession, *Devereux*, *Paul Clifford*, *Eugene Aram*, a drama on the same ghastly subject, the *Siamese Twins*,

England and the English, *Last Days of Pompeii*, *The Crisis* (politics), *Rienzi*, *The Duchess de la Valiere*, a drama, *Lady of Lyons*, ditto, *Richelieu*, ditto, *Money*, ditto; then *Ernest Maltravers*, down to *My Novel*, *The Caxtons*, *What will he do with it?* and others. From 1828 to 1869, we have thirty-one years, and, counting pamphlets and plays, more than forty works! Nor must we, in justice, forget his more ambitious works, such as *Athens, its Rise and Fall* (1837), *King Arthur*, a poem (Colburn, 1849), and *The New Timon*, a trenchant satire, written in admirable verse. All these called loud plaudits from the press at the time, and we are not of those who take simply to novelty, and abuse an old and an excellent servant. *The New Timon* had, unfortunately, a romantic story interwoven with its satire; had it not *that*, had it been a satire *pur et simple*, it would have nearly equalled those of Pope or, let us say, Gifford. In style it was between the two.

Some moral obliquity of vision, too, made Bulwer write those thrice damnable Highwaymen stories, wherein we have gentlemen highwaymen, scorning society, and philosophic footpads. If his lordship spent all the money he ever had from all his novels and plays put together in reformatories—and the sum has been a very large one, Routledge paying him for a stereotyped edition £15,000—he could not undo a tithe of the evil he has done, by giving an impulse, with that much worse writer, Harrison Ainsworth, to the Penny Murder and Robbery Novel, which has filled our gaols with some of the brightest boys of England. *Gentleman Jack* and the *Boy Highwaymen* are the true blood descendants, if illegitimate, indeed, of *Clifford* and *Jack Sheppard*. The deductions were as odious as the sentiment was false. Thackeray, who seems to have hated Bulwer's works with an honest scorn, and to have pursued him with the pertinacity of a bloodhound, lashed him as no man has ever been lashed for his *Sea Captain*, and in *Punch* wrote perhaps the wisest, wittiest, and best parody ever seen, on *Aram*, in *George de Barnwell*. Well might the romantic Bulwer have blushed and writhed; but, unfortunately, the people who would be corrupted by *Paul Clifford* and *Aram* are just those who have not the wit to read the satire, nor the open daylight knowledge (loving darkness rather than light) to feel that a rogue can never be called a wise, witty, nor a truly clever man. This Bulwer could not see. It is not too much to say that the whole of British society is at present disturbed by the result of such teachings, infinitely diffused by the talk and reproduction of inferior minds.

In 1831 Bulwer was member for St. Ives; then, in '32, for Lincoln, till '42; was rejected till '52, when he became member for Herts; in '35 he took his M.A. degree; in '38 was made a baronet. In '44 his mother died, and he took the name of Lytton; in 1853 he was made honorary D.C.L. of Oxford; in 1856 Rector of Glasgow University; in the same year he was offered a seat in Lord Derby's cabinet; in 1866 he was created Lord Lytton of Knebworth. He won his baronetcy, we believe, from the whigs, and his barony from the tories, but his whole weight and popularity from his capital and clever novels, so suited to a restless, ambitious youth of readers, so seducing, so dangerous, and yet in many parts so wise. On the whole one cannot deny the highest crown one can bestow upon the next-step-to-genius to Bulwer. He ripens as he goes on, but his art is imitative rather than original. He is too clever by half. His best works are often echoes, melodious echoes with a different sound in their repercussion, but evidently from the cries of others. The *Caxtons* echo back the strong shout of *Tristram Shandy;* the historical novels, those of Scott and even James; the history, those of Thirlwall; the dramas, those of Knowles with the poetry of Scott; the satire has the silver ring of Pope, often his very *cæsura* in the lines. Thus Bulwer is an imitative genius rather than an original one. He has written because he has had something to say, no doubt, but also because he wished to place himself upon the same high pedestal with the highest names in literature—and for a time he has done it. But posterity has a knack of taking down these plaster casts of great ones before she puts up the alabaster statue which shall endure. Nevertheless, fresh plaster of Paris looks uncommonly well.

We have said that Bulwer can hit out with vigour, and that he ripens. His *Horace*, just published, is a most admirable work, full, let us say, of genius in minute touches, of clever work all over. Lastly, as we cannot in our space follow Bulwer's busy life any longer, let us thank him for his honest, hard, and, on the whole, manly work. That he has not been more so, that he has not been conducive to Christian nobleness, that his heroes are often snobs, is not his fault; it is congenital, and upon this natural wood, so well adapted for the Bulwerian cabinet, education has placed a very fine veneer, and art a splendid French polish.

Here, too, we add a literary curiosity—Bulwer's attack on Tennyson, and Tennyson's reply in *Punch*. The fight was a great deal too well carried on to last. Bulwer *loq.*, but anonymously, as the *New Timon* was published as a mystery:—

> Not mine, not mine (O Muse forbid!) the boon
> Of borrow'd notes, the mock-bird's modish tune,
> The jingling medley of purloined conceits,
> Out-babying Wordsworth and out-glittering Keats;
> Where all the airs of patch-work pastoral chime
> To drown the ears in Tennysonian rhyme!
>
> * * * *
>
> Let school-miss Alfred vent her chaste delight
> On "darling little rooms so warm and light;"
> Chant "I'm a-weary" in infectious strain,
> And catch the "blue fly singing i' the pane;"
> Tho' praised by critics and adored by Blues,
> Tho' Peel with pudding plump the puling muse,
> Tho' Theban taste the Saxon purse controls,
> And pensions Tennyson while starves a Knowles——

We need not more. Tennyson, who had had £200 a year granted him, was touched to the quick, and wrote—for once and only once in *Punch*—as follows:—

THE NEW TIMON AND THE POETS.

We know him out of Shakespere's heart
And those full curses which he spoke;
The *old* Timon, with his noble art,
That strongly loathing, greatly broke.

So died the Old; here comes the New.
Regard him: a familiar face;
I thought we knew him: What, it's you,
The padded man that wears the stays.

Who killed the girls and thrilled the boys
With dandy pathos when you wrote.
O Lion! you that made a noise
And shook a mane *en papillotes*.

And once you tried the Muses too,
You failed, Sir; therefore now you turn;
You fall on those who are to you
As Captain is to Subaltern.

But men of long-enduring hopes,
And careless what the hour may bring,
Can pardon little would-be Popes
And Brummels, when they try to sting.

An artist, Sir, should rest in Art,
And waive a little of his claim;
To have a great poetic heart
Is more than all poetic fame.

But you, Sir, you are hard to please,
You never look but half content,
Nor like a gentleman at ease,
With moral breadth of temperament.

And what with spites and what with fears,
You cannot let a body be;
It's always ringing in your ears—
They call this man as great as me.

What profits now to understand
The merits of a spotless shirt—
A dapper boot—a little hand—
If half the little soul is dirt?

You talk of tinsel! Why we see
Old marks of rouge upon your cheeks.
You prate of Nature! *You* are he
That spilt his life upon the cliques.

A Timon you! Nay, nay, for shame;
It looks too arrogant a jest—
The fierce old man to take *his* name—
You bandbox. Off, and let him rest.

Clever but wrong, as the gentleman said under peculiar circumstances. You see these great souls are disturbed. When one poet calls another a school-girl, and the other retorts with the accusation of his opponent being a rouged bandbox, the time has come to shut up. You can say no more. But we like these old free fights; the men are both broad enough to forgive and to forget; their success, immense talents, and the full appreciation that the public has given them, are alike undeniable. May they rest under their laurels.

TOWN TALK,

AND THINGS IN GENERAL.

OPENING OF THE WINTER GYMNASTIC SEASON.

THE winter gymnastic season in Manchester may be said to have opened on Friday night last, with an Assault of Arms by the Athenæum Gymnastic Club. It was thoroughly successful, as all entertainments connected with the Athenæum, whether musical, dramatic, or gymnastic, appear to be. The attendance was as large as the dimensions of the room would allow, and included not a few ladies, some of whom it was rather painful to observe crowded far back in the room, where seeing must have been at best very problematic. No doubt the presence of ladies at these meetings is in great part due to their interest in physical training. Possibly the neat and pretty dresses of the gymnasts, spangled as in many cases they were, may have been attractive. The only exception to this good taste in costume was in the case of a gentleman who had donned a bright red shirt, and who, in some mysterious way, appeared to be recognized as the "comic man" of the party. The tendency of the spectators to burst into a laugh whenever he attempted any feat must have been a trifle embarrassing. The programme of gymnastic entertainments is not, apparently, capable of great alteration. On this occasion, it is true, a somewhat pleasing variety was given by the introduction, and subsequent dissection, of the carcase of a sheep. The individual performances which most struck us were the jumping and vaulting of Mr. Woolley; not so much that the heights cleared were very extraordinary, as that the style was so fair and taking. The unfailing popularity of boxing must be some evidence of the pugnacity inherent in human nature. It was doubtless a wise use of discretion which postponed the so called heavy weight boxing till the close. The prospect of seeing two gentlemen pursuing each other about the platform, with the ultimate intention of battering each others' faces, was too attractive to allow many spectators to depart early. The feelings of the onlookers were, of course, violently excited; popular sympathy being most aroused in the cause of the "little one" of the two combatants.

THE PRIZE PICTURE AT THE ROYAL INSTIUTION.

The usual "prize of fifty guineas for the best picture exhibited during the whole period of the exhibition [at the Royal Institution] provided it has been painted within two years," has been awarded to Mr. Keeley Halswelle, an associate of the Royal Scotch Academy, for his Roba di Roma, a scene in the Piazza Navona, Rome. The award is certainly a blunder, and would have caused surprise, only that people have ceased to be astonished by any vagary or unwisdom on the part of the council of the Royal Institution. Mr. Halswelle's is *not* the best picture exhibited. It has a certain kind of power and vigour, as most of his works have. But it is coarse and, like the picture he exhibited here in 1867 and 1868, and which we then noticed at length, it lacks taste and refinement. A correspondent enquires why Mr. Madox Brown's drawing of Elijah and the Widow's Son, which is by far the finest work of art in this year's exhibition, has failed to obtain the prize. As the council are not in habit of publishing the ground of their choice, we can only assume that they have construed the word "picture" to refer to oil paintings only. Conceding this limitation, however, their selection is none the less a blunder, and it has undoubtedly given rise to much dissatisfaction and regret.

FOOTBALL: M. A. F. C. *v.* SALE.

On Saturday last the Manchester Athletic Football Club, which is, of course, the full interpretation of the letters above, met the Sale Club on the somewhat rough and heavy ground of the latter at Sale Moor. On this occasion the match was more decided than in the struggle between the Liverpool and Manchester. The Sale team, though including several very good men (two or three of whom we individualized in the description of the previous game), was burdened by the presence of some players who were not particularly useful, and was decidedly overweighted. Early in the game the ball was "touched down," by some good play on the part of Mr. McClaren, well behind the Sale goal, but what should have been an easy goal for the Athletic Club was unexpectedly missed by Mr. Grave. That gentleman had his revenge after "half time" was called, by cleverly kicking a goal, the game thus ending clearly in favour of the stronger side. The weather was perfect for such work—a great contrast to that of the previous week. The excitement natural to the game was at one time varied by some wonderful feats of horsemanship on the part of an equestrian spectator.

"THE TRAMWAY PEOPLE."

It is very strange that the world should never, even by accident, be just—generosity is out of the question—where it is hostile. However adverse Alderman Curtis may be to the tramway schemes, it is rather hard upon his enemies that they should be abused by him for doing an advantage to his side and an injury to their own. It is eminently desirable for "the tramway people" that they should slip their bills into Parliament as quietly as possible. Because they announce their intentions on every other lamp-post in the town, they are stigmatized as "impertinent." Behold the fate of rectitude. Be virtuous, like Desdemona, and you are smothered in your bed.

MUNICIPAL ATTENDANCES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPHINX.

SIR,—My attention has been drawn to your remarks in the *Sphinx* of Saturday last, the 13th inst., upon the attendances of the aldermen and councillors. Believing you wish to state what is true, permit me to say that our clerk made a mistake in reference to my attendances. I am reported to be on the Paving Committee; to have never attended once, and to have been absent twenty-five times. The fact is I was not a member of the Paving Committee at all last year, and the clerk's mistake probably arose from my having been a member for the twenty-five years previous. Your correction of this will oblige, yours truly,

JAMES BAKE, Alderman.

Bird's Cliff, Cheetham Hill, Manchester, Nov. 18, 1869.

INSIDE THE POST OFFICE.

WE have lately had a pillar-post planted in our neighbourhood. It seems to have found congenial soil, for it is now almost the size of a sentry box, and has developed more rapidly than those of earlier planting, which have somehow had their growth stunted. We saw lately a military looking person, with a kind of knapsack, open the door and look into our pillar, as if to see if it had yet grown large enough to accommodate him, but finding that not to be the case he withdrew. He "will probably look in again," as our office boy says. One morning, just after we had slipped a letter into it, we saw the pillar opened. An empty bag replaced the full one, which was rapidly carried off. Desirous of knowing more, we accosted the carrier. "Pray, Mr. Walker, what becomes of these letters? You must have many a weary trudge to Brown Street with them." "Never go near Brown Street now," said he, "I take them to our district office, where the cart from Brown Street brings up the letters for our walks, and takes these down." We took the first opportunity of calling at the district office of our neighbourhood, and found it a sort of *imperium in imperio*.

It seems that besides Manchester Proper, as we may call it, the business centre of the city, which is supplied from the head office, the other parts and the suburbs are divided into eight districts, with an office for each. A district has from a dozen to eighteen receiving houses and pillar-posts, from which the letters are collected in the way we have described, at certain times of the day, which are marked on the letter-boxes. These collections are taken to the office for the district, and after being made into bundles of a hundred or so, are put into a portmanteau, and pushed into a mail-cart ready at hand. The district office is generally a good sized house, with a room devoted to sorting the letters, which is done at a long table divided by a partition lengthwise, and boxed off along the sides into a number of little desks or stalls, with all kinds of little shelves and boxes and drawers, for odds and ends of letters. There are also rooms for the men, the Messrs. Walker, such as a waiting-room, cloak-room, and lavatory, with apartments np stairs for the superintendent and his family. There was not much to be learnt of the general system of the Post Office at these district offices, so, having got over our surprise at their existence at all, we thought

——— meliùs petere fontes,
quam sectari rivos,

we must go to head-quarters, and visit the very shrine of the deity itself at Brown Street, and thither we accordingly repaired.

None of the offices adjoining the Triforium seemed to offer any means of entrance into the interior. If we could have made ourself up into a postal despatch of any kind we could have ascertained the cost of our carriage to "farthest Ind," and been stamped, and, if necessary, registered, at one or other of the offices near the portico, once jealously guarded by a heavy Waterloo veteran, missed of late years. Or we might even have slipped in, harlequin fashion, among the book-packets or newspapers, but being several stone-weight beyond the Post Office limitation, and, moreover, not wishing to be despatched anywhere, resolved, in official language, to "try Barnes Street," and we accordingly proceeded to the rear of the fortress. The street looked as if every variety of mail-cart had been sent that day for the Postmaster to choose from, previous to ordering "some more gigs," as the spendthrift is reported to have done. That noble animal, the horse, was not well represented among them, and did not seem to create much enthusiasm in the sporting hotel over the way.

Observing the driver of one of these vehicles enter the building with a mail-bag or two, we followed him, and at the end of a short passage halted at the threshold of a large room, which we saw at a glance was the place of which we had been in search. Fearing all sorts of pains and penalties if we had entered uninvited, we sent in our request for admission, and were at once conducted over every department, by a courteous official, who, from time to time, explained the course of business—how the letters came, how they were arranged, and how they were despatched. We are conscious of having been told much more than we were able to carry away, and are afraid that if we were suddenly left with the charge of the whole Post Office on our hands, we should probably make a mess of it. Fortunately, there is no risk of that; so we will just recount so much of the interior working of the Post Office as we have been able to carry away with us.

The names of the mails and the order in which they ought to arrive are printed in a large book, like a stock-book, with pages about a yard square. This book is kept on a stand just inside the entrance doorway. The arrival is declared by the officer bringing in the bag and the clerk receiving it to the clerk-in-charge of the book, who enters the hour of receiving it, and it is then opened at a large table. The letters are then "faced" with the address up, and in the first instance sorted into Local, "Shorts," Inland, and Foreign, and these several lots are taken away to different tables and again sorted—the local, for instance, into city and district. The city letters are sent upstairs into the old sorting room, now exclusively used by the sorters and carriers for the city district. The district letters are sent out into the various eight districts, and thence carried out. A large number of the letters received from other post offices are merely for forwarding. They, of course, require sorting and dividing among the different tables where the letters for a particular mail are made up. This, of course, is constantly going on through the day, as is also the sorting of the letters and packets dropped in at the Brown Street window.

The stamping of the letters is an important matter. Not the stamping for payment, but the affixing of the black inky seal with the name of the town and date. The seal is composite, and is constantly being re-set. It contains, as the reader may observe, a number in the lower limb of the circular seal answering to the progressive number of the mails despatched, and one or two letters on the upper limb, These are the initials of the stamping clerk who makes up the mail. As soon as his seal is set, he makes an initiatory stamp in a register book kept for the purpose, and then proceeds at once to stamp his letters, so that in the event of any mischance happening to a letter, the course of events can be traced up to or from a time when it certainly was right.

The great pressure of work is, of course, in the evening and at night. The arrivals by the day mails, and from the "short" and district offices it is easy to dispose of during the day, with comparatively few hands, and the gentle trickle of letters from the long "slits" at the front has been easily scooped out as soon as a pool worth notice has accumulated on the counter. But with the evening comes a gradually swelling tide, which sometimes threatens to overwhelm the office. Here let us venture, kind public, upon appealing to your discretion and self-interest, as well as to your sympathy with a hard-worked body of men. It is a very small thing to ask. Get rid of your letters early. There are thousands of letters posted in Manchester, both at Brown Street and at the "stumps," which could be as easily posted between four and five as between six and seven o'clock. The rule seems to be to defer them almost till "shutting-up time." Remember, that while you are joyfully hurrying to your train or 'bus, the work of the Post Office clerk is only beginning. An early posted letter is, in a manner, insured against loss, mis-sending, delay, and mis-carriage in every sense; and it is quite as much the interest of the sender as of the postal official to guard against misfortune of every kind. There is almost a separate staff maintained to rectify the public's errors and mistakes. A thoughtless or (would-be) dishonest person puts too few stamps on his letter. The sorting clerk's well-trained hand instinctively recognizes the over-weight and throws it aside. These "rejects" are taken to a separate table, there weighed, and "taxed on" with double the postage deficient, and the sorting begins again, *da capo*. Besides badly written addresses, which alone forms a mine of mischief, there is scarcely any eccentricity that can be conceived respecting a letter which is not to be found constantly. The postage-stamp "wanders not unseen" from the upper right-hand corner all over the face of the letter, and occasionally goes over the edge to the back, where it is found in company with the seal —sometimes even acting as its deputy.

At ten o'clock p.m., the large room of the Post Office is an intensely busy scene. The sorting and stamping have been going on for some hours, and the work is approaching agony point. Letters have been pouring in for hours, and, except a few late arriving bags and extra-paid letters, all are received, and the mail-bags are being made up. The London mail is in view, and has to be despatched at 10.45. This takes in not only London, but Ireland, the south and west of England, and all, or nearly all, the foreign mails, or, in other words, about all the world! The process of sealing the bags begins at 10.30, and, in a quarter of an hour, Mr. Long's steeds are tearing away to Bank Top railway station as if they had a fire-engine at their heels. After a short supplementary London mail, the North mail at twelve midnight is next for despatch. But the work is not then done. The day is done, and the stamps are fitted with the date of another day. "Shorts" and local bags and late letters are squared up. Very soon comes the mail from London, that is, from almost everywhere, and imperiously demands sorting for local delivery and forwarding. Then the country and local carts come in and exchange their freight, and the comparative repose of day succeeds.

We have heard it said that 8.15 p.m. is early for the closing hour at the district pillars and receiving houses. If the letters could be sorted there the observation might be just. But the letters, in fact, do not reach Barnes Street until nine o'clock, when the worry of the London mail assortment is on. In fact, unless the postal authorities were not more careful than the public are, the letters could not be despatched. The collection at 7.15 is not for any particular mail, but in aid of the later collection, and to obviate and correct, as far as possible, the results of the dilatory habits of the public. The pillar adjoining the Exchange requires clearing out several times between the dates marked for that purpose, or the receptacle would be full, and no more letters could be received. Still they can hardly keep pace with the receipts, and the collector has frequently seen letters which some heedless messenger has left sticking in the mouth of the pillar, quite at the mercy of any one who might choose to pull them out. We are inclined to think business men rather careless in the matter of their letters, both in sending them and in collecting them. We frequently see Messrs. Miltiades, Themistocles, and Co., fetching their own letters from the private box department, but let anybody watch the Brown Street front of the Post Office any morning from 8-15 to 9, and see the number of usually ill-paid office-boys bringing away bundles of letters from their masters' boxes, without even the protection of a satchel, but hand-carried, often through the wet, and the dangers that the numerous boy-games expose them to.

The various auxiliary novelties that have been added of late years, such as the Money Order Office, the registration of letters, and the Savings' Bank Department, we have not space to do more than mention. They have become wonderfully absorbed into and made part of the postal system. Next year the Telegraph system will be embraced in its ever increasing folds. Indeed, we expect to see in a few years only two institutions left in the country—the County Court and the Post Office—and even then we should not despair of seeing one eat up the other.

A VISIT TO ASHTON PARISH CHURCH.

WITHIN a few yards of the old railway station at Ashton-under-Lyne, a place generally supposed to be coeval with large factories and steam cotton machinery only, stands a mansion, some parts of which are as old as any known building in England. Long before the great ecclesiastical buildings arose, the Tintern, the Rievaulx, the Furness, or the Valle Crucis Abbey, whose ruins point to a once magnificent existence—before even their foundations were laid or their sites chosen, there stood here one of the land-marks of the boundary "lyne" of the two ancient kingdoms of Northumbria and Mercia. The local chief here kept watch and ward, and long before Falaise Castle saw the birth of the future Rex Anglorum, as he loved to be styled, the Saxon thane exercised dominion, practically undisputed, save when the marauding band of Norwegian or Danish pirates penetrated so far in quest of plunder.

Under the protection of this stronghold, religion reared, violet-like, its modest head, and now, with the God's-acre only between them, stands St. Michael's, the parish church of Ashton-under-Lyne. Founded in 1291, during the period of the great settlement of the kingdom, with traditions of an even then vanished predecessor, it was restored in 1413. Even the later year is a time of which one can hardly form an adequate notion in its relation to the present. It was eighty years before Columbus left "the less'ning shore" of Spain, bound for the discovery of a new world. Looking backward for it down the roll of history, the day when Charles's tragedy was played out in front of Whitehall is not quite half way! What subsequent renovations were made let the archæologist and the architect tell, the long line of rectors, ministers, and servants, cleric and laic, having gone and left but little record, probably

——— carent quia vate sacro.

The unusually high tower, built in 1817, is probably a copy of what had before stood there, but the wide seven-light east window seems to suggest the work of Tudor times; perhaps in the later years of Elizabeth's reign, when the power of the State and Church was consolidated, and the parish register began (as here in 1594) to calendar the baptisms and marriages of those whose burials were afterwards noted in its page. The exterior of the church is what an English parish church might be expected to be. Chancel, nave, aisles, and porch of stone, slightly soot-incrusted and weather-stained, and from the tower a peal of nine sweet bells discoursed most complicated music one breezy Sunday morning of late, when, descending from the heights of Dukinfield, we crossed the Tame, then swollen and yellow as Tiber, and, passing by the quondam stronghold and the memorial of many a rude forefather of the then hamlet, we entered the church by the south porch. Taken charge of by a most respectable sexton, we were soon in a pew opening from a wide passage down the centre of the nave, as wide about as the pews on each side of it were in length—the very Sackville Street of aisles. We had scarcely said our *ora pro nobis*, when we saw a small flock of white-surpliced gentlemen coming down from the east end. One stopped at the reading-desk; the others marched past us, and up the gallery stairs to the organ-loft! We had generally found, up to this, that surplices were worn (*more* Stocks and Co. at the Cathedral) by men and boys singing together. Men and boys are sometimes, as at All Saints', here, supplemented by singing women, and in other cases, as at St. Paul's, Brunswick Street, gay bonnets and chignons are seen, instead of the cherub faces of the choir-boys; but we never before saw surpliced men singing with women in the organ-gallery. The unusual mixture produced some very good music, however, though *Hymns Ancient and Modern* were ill exchanged for *Bickersteth's Collection*, in which, with some difficulty, we recognized the mangled remains of two or three old friends. The Nicene Creed was taken to a "tone" we did not remember, but it was particularly well done. The organist who "presided" should be content with the excellent instrument he commands, and not try to "preside" over the singers' voices also. It might be that the Sunday-school children, who mustered in force, required a little "drowning" now and then, for they sang very flat, and dragged down the tone speedily. A little practice beforehand, in school, would soon remedy this. The prayers were read by the incumbent of a neighbouring church, who, apparently for variety's sake, had come to revisit the place of his former curacy. The congregational part was chanted or sung by the upstairs party, and one of the curates preached a good sermon in an unimpressive manner. The offertory, quickly collected by the wardens and a small crowd of assistants, was followed by the usual prayers and termination, and a jubilant strain from the organ inspirited us again to contend with the south-west breeze which blew gratefully on our heated face, as we issued from the church. There seems to be a disposition, both on the part of clergy and congregation, to do things decently and in order. There were some small occasional faults and shortcomings, so very obvious to us, as a looker-on, that their existence seems as if it needed only to be mentioned to cause them to be avoided or corrected. But they are, comparatively speaking, trifles to the great constitutional struggle now pending.

In 1840, it seems, the church was almost falling to the ground for want of repair. The pews, dating from 1790, were removed to prevent them from falling on their occupants, and the floor was about as level as the surface of the sea is now at Blackpool at tide-time. So it became clear that something must be done. Lord Stamford, the patron of the living, offered the churchwardens £4,000, and proposed that the church should be free. The pew-holder could not see beyond his pew, and preferred to rebuild it, which he did on the ground floor, to the tune of £600—about twenty shillings a sitting—and the gallery was rebuilt in 1844, under a "faculty," a kind of ecclesiastical patent, a document which costs a great deal, and binds nobody to anything, except to pay the bill for it. Somebody or other was to be at liberty to rebuild the gallery, and let the pews in it at a yearly rent of ten shillings per sitting, "until the whole cost of it was repaid," a scheme worthy of the projectors of Laputa, or of him who proposed to pay off the national debt by penny readings! The gallery cost some £1,200, raised by sale of the pews at £2 a sitting, and the faculty was thrown to the winds. But as pews could not very well be built in a tumble-down church, the fabric was first restored. Lord Stamford's £4,000 was somehow got hold of. Subscriptions, bazaars, and what not raised some £2,500 more (part of which, however, went to the cemetery expenses), and the thing was done. And solid, substantial, and handsome the place now looks. Certes, the decorator and the scagliolist, have taken their pastime therein.

But since *Hamlet* doesn't please some people with the Ghost only omitted, how if Hamlet himself be wanting? Where was the rector all this time. He was, no doubt, first and foremost in the good work, instant in season and out of season also, getting in donations, talking over pew-holders, in short, leaping into the gulf and rushing into the breach in every possible manner. Not a bit of it. For the restoration and repairs of the chancel, which the rector is bound in consideration of his income to keep in repair, he paid, by two instalments, £200. Two hundred pounds for the all but rebuilding the chancel, which, as any one can see by the division in the roof, is nearly half the church! The pews in the chancel were rebuilt at the general restoration, at a cost of £84, towards which the rector contributed the munificent sum of £10, and for this he has claimed, and for the most part received, pew rents to the amount of about £40 per annum! Now the rector is the Rev. George Chetwode, a nephew of an Earl of Stamford. He was appointed to the living in 1813—two years before the battle of Waterloo—and has held it ever since. The living is worth £1,500 per annum, and there is a parsonage. Out of this he pays £250 a year to two curates, and lends them the house, and subscribes £5 per annum to the churchwardens' expenses, and £2 to the school fund! So £1,500, *minus* £250 *minus* £5 *minus* £2 equals £1,243. But this is not all. The rector has sold the coal under the glebe land, and has received therefor an amount which, if well invested, would produce not less than £500 a year. The reader will here observe, "Well, but the labourer is worthy of his hire; no doubt the rector is a hard-working parish priest." Wrong again. The rector has not been near the church for *ten* years, and he has not officiated in it for *thirty* years! Yet he has generally enjoyed good health, and is now a hale old man of near eighty! The difference between 1813 and 1869, namely, 56, we will use to multiply £1,240 with: product, £69,440, and the coal money thrown in besides! "The pity of it!"

The exertions of the Ashton people under these circumstances are beyond praise, but doubt has evidently of late crossed the mind of some of them, as to whether they are making the most of what they have so well maintained. Somebody, probably a Tuesday visitor to Manchester, who had got accidentally impressed on to a coroner's inquest, suggested that

the church should be made free and open, but the ordinary congregation were not prepared to go quite so far as that. Indeed, to our mind, the free and open system has been treated and advocated in and about Manchester in such an impolitic way, that, excellent as we consider it to be in principle, we are not surprised to find it was not adopted at Ashton. It was then proposed to see what the bishop had to recommend, and a statement of the law on the case was supplied by his law-officer, Dr. Haggard, the chancellor of the diocese, and printed and widely circulated among the congregation. From this we find that no pew in a parish church is the property of any private person; that the distribution of pews and seats rests with the churchwardens, as the bishop's officers; that they are to allot them to the parishioners at discretion, so as to afford suitable accommodation to as many as possible; and that no pew or seat there can legally be let or sold by any person. This plan was to be tried, and the present wardens were elected last Easter to carry it out, not going so far as the free and open, or "first come first served" principle, but by allotting the seats to parishioners who wanted them till the church was filled. Archdeacon Durnford, in his charge to them in May last, on the occasion of "swearing in," repeated the law of the matter, and directed them to disregard all private ownership of pews. They are now letting all the pews, both up-stairs and down-stairs, upon conditions which are clearly printed and fixed in every pew in the church. These conditions are—1. That no payment is made. 2. That they (the sittings) are not to be transferred without the sanction of the wardens. 3. That if not occupied by the assignee at the commencement of the service, the officials are at liberty to seat any other person therein. The wardens are treating all pews alike, but with discretion. If a pew is rented from some person claiming as owner, the unoccupied part is filled whenever an access of worshippers make it necessary, and in the last instance is resort made to the pew partially occupied by the claimant as owner.

It is, no doubt, a very difficult matter for the churchwardens to carry out the plain law of the land; but, as a door must, according to the French proverb, be either shut or open, the parish church pews must belong either to the pew-holders or the churchwardens. The law says the wardens; and we think the Ashtonians, in common with other Englishmen, are a law-abiding people. We are disposed to recommend the wardens at once to take away the doors from all the pews. When they are once "open," the "free" will follow easily.

In the midst of the excitement created in Ashton by the wardens' proceedings, some attempt has been made, we believe, to import into the controversy the bitterness of political partizanship. How much this is to be deprecated, it is needless for us to say. The question is not a matter of politics at all, but simply of the best way of serving the interests of religion, and of using a large and handsome church, in the midst of a teeming population, for the benefit of the greatest number.

OUR PICTURE EXHIBITIONS.

WHY THEY FAIL.

IN concluding our notices of the exhibition at the Royal Institution, we remarked that it was an average one, and no more; that "the pictures of which good can be said are, with few exceptions, but of mediocre merit, whilst there is a large number of works which it is impossible to praise, and some without the remotest promise of better things." Considering that more works of art are bought in the manufacturing districts of Lancashire and Yorkshire than in any other of an equal size in the kingdom, and that Manchester is the metropolis of that district, it is worth while to enquire into the causes of the inferiority of our exhibition, and, if possible, suggest some alterations in its management, by which it may become in every way more satisfactory—in the quality of works exhibited, in the number of visitors, and in the amount of money realized by sales.

The council of the Royal Institution, by opening their exhibition so early in the autumn as September, doubtless hope to obtain pictures from the Royal Academy, which closes rather earlier, but they fail in their object almost entirely, and for two reasons. The first is, that before sending to the Royal Academy, all the principal artists in London have what may be called private views in their own studios, where their works are seen by the chief dealers and collectors in the country, and, in the majority of cases, the most important works are sold from the easel, and before they are seen publicly. It cannot be expected that purchasers will, after allowing them to be exhibited for three months at the Academy, be willing to lend them at once to Manchester, thereby foregoing the enjoyment of their purchases for a quarter of a year more, for the sake of an exhibition in which they have not perhaps the slightest interest. Except, therefore, when one is sent to compete for the prize, Manchester has but little chance of obtaining any except unsold pictures from Burlington House, and such pictures are, to a certain extent, unsuccessful, and though a number of them would of course raise the standard of the exhibition considerably, still Manchester has not yet succeeded in obtaining even these.

The second reason why the council fail in their endeavours to obtain pictures from the Academy, or, indeed, from any artist who has any regard for his work, is to be found in the way some of the details of the exhibition are managed. Everyone who pretends to any acquaintance with art, still more anyone who presumes to undertake any work connected with the management of an exhibition, should know that the first quality necessary in a picture is that it should be of a piece in itself; that it should contain (taking the question of colour) the exact amount of blue, of green, of red, &c., and if that be correctly done, and the picture be a complete one, no one portion of colour can be added to or substracted from it without changing the entire scheme, and almost of a certainty destroying the picture. If the council, or committee, or whoever the responsible persons may be, had considered what they were about before they selected the labels for the water-colour drawings, it would have been as well. As it is, they have this year, with an ignorance which is almost criminal, chosen them about the size of half-a-crown, and of a vivid blue colour. A year or two ago, they were a bright yellow. It is hardly possible to hope for better things of an exhibition which tolerates such a barbarism. But this is not the worst. If, in spite of being ruined by these blue spots, a drawing has the good fortune to be sold, the happy fact is recorded on the frame by another and a larger label, this time of a hideous pink colour. When an artist sends to an exhibition he has many evil chances to go through. His picture may be rejected; but he knows that, and takes the risk. His work may be badly hung; he takes his chance as to that also. He knows, too, that every picture suffers in a greater or less degree in an exhibition from juxtaposition with other paintings of an antagonistic nature, and which no care on the part of the hanging committee can entirely obviate. But an artist has a right to expect every care to be taken that his picture, if hung, shall be shewn to the very best advantage. It is not to be wondered that the Manchester Exhibition is not regarded with favour by painters, as long as their right, even to common sense treatment, is ignored, and such atrocities as the blue and pink labels are perpetrated.

If the council of the Royal Institution really wish to have a satisfactory exhibition, it will be worth their while to try, if only for one season, a few experimental changes. They might for example, try the effect of keeping the exhibition open for a much shorter time than at present, certainly for not more than two months; and if the date on which it would close were distinctly made known to the public, it seems most likely that, the interest being concentrated within a short period, the council would, in the end, find the number of visitors much larger than it has been during recent years. It is quite certain that artists and collectors would be much more willing to exhibit their pictures if they knew that the rooms would not, as is generally the case, be absolutely deserted during the latter part of the time the exhibition is open. At present, the council open their exhibition in September, which is a most unfortunate time, for during that month and for some time afterwards, a large proportion of the public are usually absent from town, and most of the collectors who are likely to be of use to the exhibition, are fresh from the picture season in London, with which Manchester can scarcely hope to compete.

Manchester is the head-quarters of perhaps the largest firm of picture-dealers in England, who have, undoubtedly, the first opportunities of buying the very best works produced. At this moment they have on view an important collection of water-colour drawings, and they had a similar exhibition last year simultaneously with the season at the Royal Institution. Might not an arrangement be made between the council of the Royal Institution and the Messrs. Agnew, by which the two galleries should not be open at the same time? It is impossible but that they both suffer by their co-existence.

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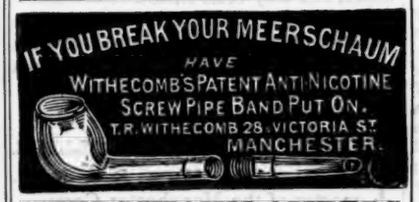

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"How full of briars is this work-a-day world."—*Shakspere*

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THE RIDDLE OF THE SPHINX.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

Night flies; and lo! the rising sun displays
The tombs, where rest his mighty sons of old;
And still a circling glory from his rays
Seems to embrace them in a cloud of gold.
'Twixt these and where the river frets the sand,
The quaintly graven surface of a stone
Shows one, who set a riddle to the land,
Where till 'twas solved nor rest nor peace was known.

[The initials of the answer to each line must be read *down* for the first word of the final solution, and *up* for the second.]

THE TRUE AND THE FALSE IN ARCHITECTURE.

[FROM RUSKIN'S "SEVEN LAMPS OF ARCHITECTURE."]

STRANGE that a nation so distinguished for its general uprightness and faith as the English, should admit in their architecture more of pretence, concealment, and deceit, than any other of this or past time. If there were no other causes for the failures which of late have marked every great occasion for architectural exertion, these petty dishonesties would be enough to account for all. It is the first step, and not the least, towards greatness to do away with these. We may not be able to command good, or beautiful, or inventive architecture; but we *can* command an honest architecture. The meagreness of poverty may be pardoned, the sternness of utility respected; but what is there but scorn for the meanness of deception.

There are two reasons, both weighty, against the substitution of cast or machine work for that of the hand; one, that all cast and machine work is bad, as work; the other, that it is dishonest. Exactly as a woman of feeling would not wear false jewels, so would a builder of honour disdain false ornaments. The using of them is just as downright and inexcusable a lie. You use that which pretends to a worth which it has not; which pretends to have cost, and to be, what it did not, and is not; it is an imposition, a vulgarity, an impertinence, and a sin. Nobody wants ornaments in this world, but everybody wants integrity. All the fair devices that ever were fancied, are not worth a lie. Leave your walls as bare as a planed board, or build them of baked mud and chopped straw, if need be; but do not roughcast them with falsehood.

One thing we have in our power—the doing without machine ornament and cast-iron work. All the stamped metals, and artificial stones, and imitation woods and bronzes, over the invention of which we have daily exultation—all the short, and cheap, and easy ways of doing that whose difficulty is its honour—are just so many obstacles in our already encumbered road. They will not make us happier or wiser—they will neither extend the pride of judgment nor the privilege of enjoyment—they will only make us shallower in our understandings, colder in our hearts, and feebler in our wits.

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"CHEAP BEER v. TEETOTALISM."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPHINX.

SIR,—I have been favoured with the perusal of an article in your paper of the 6th instant headed as above; and as you express a wish to promote "the discussion of the question," I presume you will not refuse insertion of the following remarks. I acknowledge, at the onset, that I am one of "the increasing band of fanatics," not quite of yesterday, but on that and other irrelevant matters, I have no wish to dwell. The pamphlet of Mr. Fielden's, on which your comments are based, I read long ago, as well as others to the same effect, and I now forward for your perusal another pamphlet, in which I think you will find a complete answer. In the mean time, allow me to notice two points which I deem of most importance.

First: You look upon beer as "the most nutritious drink that could be brewed." This was Cobbett's opinion; it is Mr. Fielden's; and I am free to admit, that even yet, in the face of so much that has been proved to the contrary, it is an opinion that extensively prevails. But I hesitate not to affirm that is a great delusion, and am prepared at any time to prove this assertion. There is nothing in the best malt liquor that is nutritious but the barley; for the water, the hops, and the alcohol, —its chief components—can make no pretensions to nutriment. To brew a gallon of strong ale 6lbs. of barley is used; and if this were retained in the ale it certainly would be highly nutritious. But by the various processes in its manufacture, the 6lbs. is reduced to about 10oz., and that of the worst part of the grain. This being a most important part of the enquiry, I will state the various stages through which the barley has to pass, and by which the loss of full 5¼lbs. is sustained, without any equivalent of a nutritious kind being obtained:—

	lbs.
To brew a gallon of ale we take of barley	6
In making this into malt, we lose in "spirits" or "malt combs"	1½
After mashing, we dispose of, in the shape of "grains"	2
By fermenting the liquor, converting the sugar into alcohol, we lose	1
And, lastly, in *fining* the ale, the "barrel bottoms" amount to	0¾
	5¼

I maintain that these statements demonstrate that the liquor we are contending about is *not* a "nutritious liquor." The *water* I grant may deserve that name, but the *spirit* and the *gas* certainly do not; and as for the bit of gummy barley, drowned in the bulk, it is so small as to render it undeserving of such a name. It is less than a pennyworth in a gallon, agreeing with the testimony of Baron Liebig, that "ten pints of ale would not supply as much nourishment as a pound of bread." In *malting* the starch is converted into sugar; in *mashing* the sugar is washed out, and the liquor is called "sweet wort;" in *fermentation* the sugar produces spirit and carbonic acid gas; and in *fining* the liquor the heavy parts of the barley sink to the bottom of the barrel. From first to last the object kept in view in manufacturing beer is not to produce a nutritious but an intoxicating article.

I will not condescend to notice the adulterations on which you lay so much stress; I leave that to be settled by the brewers, sellers, and drinkers, amongst themselves. I refer to *sound* beer made from malt and hops only. The following is a chemical analysis of a quart of "good ale":—

Water	91.065
Alcohol	5·000
Extract	3·885
Acetic Acid	·050
	100·000

The following is in a more popular form:—

Quart of ale	39	ounces.
Water	35	do.
Alcohol, or pure Spirit	1¼	do.
Barley	2¾	do.
Total	39	do.

These figures demonstrate the fallacy of the common notion that beer is a "highly nutritious beverage," and if it were not for the whisky it contains, neither Mr. Fielden nor any of the admirers of our national beverage would drink it.

Secondly: I maintain that all intoxicating liquors, beer among the rest, being luxuries, are proper objects of taxation. The malt tax, which is complained of, is simply a substitute for a tax upon beer, and is an economical expedient for that purpose. It is found much more convenient to lay the impost upon the malt in a solid form, in a comparatively few places, than to attach it to the liquid in any of its stages of manufacture; or at the endless number of places where the brewing and selling are carried on. And instead of 70 per cent of a tax upon beer, which the readers of your article would generally run away with, a correct calculation would make it little more than a seventh part of that sum. Barley used in its natural state is perfectly free from tax; but if made into malt, in order that it may by fermenting the liquor, yield the intoxicating ingredient, alcohol, a tax of 2s. 8d. a bushel is imposed—this is the 70 per cent. complained of—yielding to the revenue upwards of six millions a year, and which the beer drinkers seem quite willing to pay, so as to be freed from this amount of taxation upon more important and necessary articles. I have taken the trouble to calculate the amount of this tax when it comes upon the drink in the shape of beer. The malt tax has been variously stated by different authorities as equal to a *farthing* to a *penny* a quart; and the truth is, it does not in any case exceed the larger sum. The precise amount simply depends upon the quantity of water used in brewing a given quantity of malt. The "length," as the brewers call it, varies from 72 gallons to 144 gallons to the quarter. In order to make it plain, the charge per gallon upon the beer by the malt tax is as follows:—

If brewed 144 gallons to the quarter,	1½d.	per gal.	duty.
„ 120 „ „	2¼d.	„	
„ 90 „ „	2¾d.	„	
„ 72 „ „	3¼d.	„	

so that on the weaker kind of malt liquor the tax is short of a halfpenny a quart, and on the strongest short of a penny. If I believed that beer was a "nutritious beverage," that it was one of the "comforts of the working classes," and if I did not know that it is the source of a great amount of intoxication and misery—that, to use your own expression, "it muddles a man's brains a little, but does not steal them away altogether," and, generally, that it is the first step in the career of drunkenness—I should be as much opposed to taxing the "poor man's beer" as Mr. Fielden. But while all kinds of alcoholic liquors are taxed, these are good reasons why beer should not escape, both as it respects revenue and the restraints it imposes in favour of sobriety. Nay, while tea, coffee, cocoa, and sugar have to contribute to the national expenditure, why should beer or any other kind of intoxicating liquors be exempt?—Yours, J. LIVESEY.

Preston, Nov. 19th, 1869.

[For very obvious reasons, any discussion of this subject between Mr. Livesey and ourselves would be practically useless. We not only start from different premisses, but the object or purpose of each is entirely distinct. Mr. Livesey is an advocate of total abstinence, and would, doubtless, go for the legislative prohibition of all drinking in order to gain his end. We—eschewing what we regard as Utopian—are advocates or promoters of temperance; of a wise use, not of abuse or disuse. We, like Mr. Livesey, consider drunkenness as the greatest, and consequently the most deplorable, of our social evils; but our notions of the right mode of warring against it are wide as the poles asunder. Hence, on such a subject as the effect of the malt tax on the sobriety and morals of the people, we are likely to remain hopelessly at variance with Mr. Livesey. We print his communication willingly. His arguments are temperately stated, and they come from a representative man on his (the total abstainers') side of the question. But we fail to see that they affect or invalidate our position in the slightest degree.—EDITOR *Sphinx*.]

PROPOSAL for a DERBY COLLEGE.

THE Rev. John Henn, B.A., Headmaster of the Manchester Commercial Schools, Stretford New Road, has addressed the following letter to the committee appointed for the erection of a memorial to the late Earl of Derby:—

Having heard a suggestion that it would be very appropriate if the Public Memorial to that great statesman and scholar, the late Earl of Derby, should take the form of an Educational Endowment, I venture most respectfully to lay before you the following statement:—

It is well known to some of the leading men of this city that a movement has been contemplated for some months past for erecting a large school or college, to be conducted on principles similar to those of the Liverpool College, of which the late lamented Earl was patron. That such an institution is much needed, especially at this end of Manchester, is admitted by all who are aware how very rapidly the population has of late years increased; and, when it is taken into consideration that, in a population of not less than half a million, there is no school which has more than 350 boys, it is felt that middle class education is most inadequately provided for,—especially that kind of education which, from its nature and cost, is adapted to the wants of the many thousands of the lower middle class. A subcommittee was appointed by the committee of these schools to consider how such a work might be carried out, and the result of their arduous labours at nine meetings you will find embodied in the printed report (a copy of which I send you) presented to our committee at a large and influentially-attended meeting in the Cathedral Library, on April 29th. This report, after it had been amended, was unanimously adopted, and we hope that measures will shortly be taken to carry out the recommendations contained in it.

But as it is possible that it may be thought advisable to postpone the work for a short time, in consequence of the badness of trade, I venture, on my own responsibility, to present this scheme to your notice in the movement which you have now in hand. It seems to me, as an individual, that a "Derby College" would be a most suitable form for the memorial

to take; as, from the late Earl's connection with the Liverpool College as patron, and with Rossall School as president, it is evident that he felt the warmest interest in the education of the middle classes of this county. The scheme, thus sketched in the report to our committee, if carried out, will, as you may observe, not be confined to Manchester alone; and in this respect, too, it seems that, as a South Lancashire movement, it will accord with the views of the promoters of the Derby Memorial.

It is also worthy of notice that, as such a School would be neutral on the question of Politics, no difficulty could be felt by any persons, whatever their political opinions, in uniting for the promotion of this object; and in so doing, of honouring the revered memory of a nobleman and statesman who was so sincerely loved in South Lancashire, where he was personally known.—I have the honour to be, my Lords and Gentlemen, your faithful and obedient servant,

JOHN HENN (Clerk), B.A.

TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

OUT OF PRINT.—The *Sphinx* of Saturday last is out of print. In reply to numerous applications, the publisher deems it desirable to repeat a previous announcement that no copies of the number (64) for Saturday, October 30th, remain on hand or are obtainable. Several other recent numbers are nearly out of print, and subscribers who wish to complete sets would do well to apply without delay.

R. A.—The statement and accompanying list are misleading. The eighteen articles enumerated are the work of no more than four writers. Our position is entirely unaffected by the alleged changes.

RECEIVED.—B.; Alpha; J. C. (declined, with thanks); A. B. C.

ERRATA.—In the article last week on Mr. Mark Lemon, Lord Dudley should be Audley; Lebro D'oro should be Libro D'Oro; and, in the quotation from Christopher Sly, *pala bris* should be one word, palabris.

Communications should be addressed to the Editor, *Sphinx* Office, 37, Oxford Street, Manchester. Every manuscript should bear the name and address of the sender. All contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage. No replies or MSS. can be delivered on personal application.

Business communications and advertisements should be addressed to Messrs. J. G. KERSHAW & Co., "Main" Printing Offices, 37, Oxford-st, Manchester

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SPORTS AND PASTIMES IN MANCHESTER.

The following articles and descriptive sketches have appeared in the *Sphinx*:—

No.
34.—Crossing Swords with Her Majesty's Inniskillings.
37.—A Bicycle Race at the Free Trade Hall.
39.—The Cumbrian and Westmorland Wrestlers.
40.—Gymnastics Again: Another Death.
41.—Owens College Athletic Sports.
43.—Lancashire *v.* Surrey, at Old Trafford.
44.—The Bicycle Contests at the Amphitheatre.
46.—An Assault-of-Arms at the Free Trade Hall.
47.—The Match between Lancashire and Sussex.
48.—The Athletic Festival.
49.—Amateur *v.* Professional Cricket.
49.—Athletic Fete at Longsight.
50.—Mode of Awarding Athletic Prizes.
51.—Lancashire Cricketers in the South.
52.—Pedestrianism *v.* Gymnastics.
53.—Lancashire *v.* Warwickshire.
54.—Swimming Races at the Mayfield Bath.
54.—Manchester *v.* Broughton.
55.—Lancashire *v.* Sussex.
56.—The Great Boat Race: Oxford *v.* Harvard.
64.—Billiards: Cook's Extraordinary Feat.
66.—Billiards without the Spot Stroke.
67.—Football: Manchester *v.* Liverpool.
68.—Opening of the Winter Gymnastic Season.
68.—Football: Manchester *v.* Sale.

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Castle B	*Brown*	SHERRY	1/10	22/	11
Castle C	*Pale*	SHERRY	2/4	28/	11
Castle CC	*Gold*	SHERRY	2/4	28/	11
Castle D	*Brown*	SHERRY	2/4	28/	11
Castle G	*Pale*	SHERRY	2/10	34/	11
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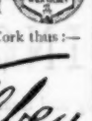

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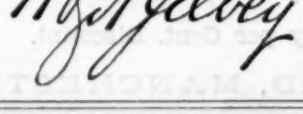

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